

Conference on the socioeconomic impacts of universities and public research in Catalonia

La Pedrera Auditorium, Barcelona

Secretary for Universities and Research,
directors-general,
university presidents
and vice presidents,
CERCA and research centre directors,
friends,

Transparency and accountability are inevitable and essential concepts for the whole of the service sector.

Specifically, in the case of the Catalan Public University Association (ACUP), this commitment involves a firm and ongoing willingness to make different aspects of our university and research system accessible and comprehensible.

As will become clear during this event, what common sense has told us is supported by the data: investing in research reaps rewards – rewards in science, work, the economy and, above all, society.

Paraphrasing or reinterpreting the famous phrase by Harvard's former president, Derek Bok, if you think investing in research and promoting innovation is expensive, try waiting for others to invent things.

Let's not fool ourselves, the sources of funding may vary.

Universities can combine their role as knowledge generators with that of connectors to other nodes of innovation, and new technologies can multiply our efficiency, but at the end of the day, research requires investment, planning and strategy.

Success does not come about from a top-down model, through an order from the

ministry, but from a bottom-up model involving all those that help fund and stimulate activity throughout the research ecosystem.

It is worth noting that our ecosystem has proved itself to be both courageous and competitive, successfully surviving recent years in which investment has dropped considerably.

The optimistic view would see the university and research system's capacity to resist as a good indication of its robustness.

But everything has its limit, and before we start feeling sorry for ourselves, it would be better to restore the emphasis on programmes that combine resources, planning and strategy.

Allow me to quote Steve Jobs: "Innovation distinguishes between a leader and a follower".

I would dearly love it if we could create an opportunity for ourselves. So, we need resources, planning and strategy.

Allow me to introduce two of the report's authors: Dr Jordi Suriñach, director of the AQR-Lab, the University of Barcelona's Laboratory of Applied Economics, and Dr Juan Antonio Duro, Professor of Economics at Universitat Rovira i Virgili, who co-authored it their colleagues Joaquim Murillo and Esther Vayà at the University of Barcelona, and Agustí Segarra, Mercedes Teruel, Pere Segarra and Maria Dolors Setó at Universitat Rovira i Virgili.



«The Catalan university and research system is well aligned with the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) for 2030. For the first time in its history the UN has included higher education (number 4) and innovation (number 9) as goals»

I'm not going to give away any spoilers with regard to the data and content of the report, but I'd like to stress that it shows the Catalan university and research system is well aligned with the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) for 2030.

For the first time in its history the UN has included higher education (number 4) and innovation (number 9) as goals.

This report demonstrates that the Catalan system not only makes a very considerable contribution to the Catalan GDP but also plays a very significant role in terms of social impact, as seen in a number of factors and aspects. For this we may congratulate ourselves.